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## "How do I approach a spiritual caring opportunity with someone for the first time?"

### A spiritual (pastoral) care conversation



I could hear someone playing the piano; I knew who it was, this lovely lady would often come to the lounge and play. I listened and then when she had stopped, I commended her on her playing and how I loved to hear it. She told me that when she feels "sick in her heart" she will come and play. The conversation developed and I found out that she was missing her parents; there was a hole in her heart that is always there. "I know it's part of life and you can't do anything about it" she said,

"because they are gone". I reassured her that it was OK to feel like that and to think about her parents. (*"People think that grief slowly gets smaller with time but in reality, grief stays the same size but slowly life begins to grow around it" Lois Tonkin 1996*). Music was important to this lady; to connect to her feelings. We talked about her parents; they were people with a strong faith (Christadelphians) – and we talked about her faith journey; she too had become a baptised Christadelphian as a young person but had later met and married a gentleman who was a non-believer and was against her actively practising her faith and attending the meetings; but she never lost her faith through this time.

She loved her husband, and they had a family, but he passed away a number of years ago. Time went on and she came to live at a Christadelphian Aged care facility. That was no coincidence. Since being with us she has started attending the Bible readings, the Sunday morning breaking of bread service and her faith has been revived and renewed; a faith which she affirms gives you comfort and peace, in the turmoil of the world around us. This beautiful sister is now 'back in the fold' joining in with Christadelphian activities. *It reminds me of how Jesus portrayed such situations in the parable of the lost sheep and the joy in heaven (not only in heaven, in our hearts too) when one is brought back to the ecclesial fold.* This lady who is in her twilight years told me at another time "now is a golden time when you can reflect, stop and be thankful for what you've got".

For some of us, music is a great nourisher of our inner being inspiring songs connecting with the emotions in our heart which allow us to affirm our sense of purpose and meaning in our life and say, "Yes Lord I believe, I trust in You". Sometimes we have no words, we can't explain our emotion we just know that a spiritual connection has been made.

For others, being in the garden, walking in nature, observing a sunrise, witnessing a rainbow, watching the waves, are all opportunities for awe and wonderment; developing a spiritual connection and a knowledge that we are part of something much bigger than us.

A spiritual caring opportunity is to take time to connect with a person, to listen, to listen to their heart and what helps them to connect to God or to support them in their quest for meaning about life. Maybe it's a verse that speaks to us from the Bible, or a comment made in an exhortation, or out in nature just appreciating the trees around us or at night time looking up at the stars above - and we, like David in Psalm 8, might reflect *"When I consider your heavens, the work of your*

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fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?”

Sometimes, an inspiring verse with a beautiful background can help someone make that spiritual connection.



Sometimes, there might not be any words but in whatever is happening around us to know that God is our refuge and strength, amid chaos and uncertainty in our life to just reflect and “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10)

Alison Caudery

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